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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This "Listing of Claims" replaces all prior versions of claims in the subject application:

1. (Currently Amended) A sampling module ~~vial autosampler~~ comprising:
a ~~sampling module including a~~ sampling needle, wherein the sampling module is ~~and being~~ adapted to bring the sampling needle and a vial together such that the sampling needle pierces a septum on the vial;
a sealing boot disposed about the sampling needle; and
wherein the sealing boot engages the vial septum when the vial is fully engaged with the sample needle.
2. (Currently Amended) The sampling module ~~autosampler~~ of claim 1, and further comprising an ejector tab coupled to the sealing boot, the ejector tab capable of urging the vial from the sampling needle upon completion of sample acquisition.
3. (Currently Amended) The sampling module ~~autosampler~~ of claim 2, wherein the sealing boot is constructed from a chemically inert material.
4. (Currently Amended) The sampling module ~~autosampler~~ of claim 3, wherein the chemically inert material is silicone rubber.

5. (Currently Amended) The sampling module ~~autosampler~~ of claim 4, wherein the silicone rubber has a hardness selected to be between a range of about 30 to about 90 durometer D.
6. (Currently Amended) The sampling module ~~autosampler~~ of claim 5, wherein the silicone rubber has a hardness of about 40 durometer D.
7. (Currently Amended) The sampling module ~~autosampler~~ of claim 2, wherein the sealing boot further comprises an upper plate disposed on a first side of ejector tab, and a lower plate disposed on a second side of the ejector tab, and wherein the sealing boot further comprises a first gasket sealing between the upper plate and the ejector tab, and a second gasket sealing between the lower plate and the ejector tab.
8. (Currently Amended) The sampling module ~~autosampler~~ of claim 7, wherein the second gasket engages the septum and the first gasket engages a needle block.
9. (Currently Amended) The sampling module ~~autosampler~~ of claim 1, wherein the sealing boot is adapted to limit analyte leakage between the sampling needle and the septum.
10. (Currently Amended) The sampling module ~~autosampler~~ of claim 1, wherein the sealing boot is disposed proximate a tip of the sampling needle when a vial is not engaged with the sampling needle.

11. (Currently Amended) The sampling module ~~autosampler~~ of claim 1, and further comprising a needle block, and wherein the sealing boot contacts the needle block when the sampling needle and vial are brought together such that a septum of the vial is pierced by the sampling needle, and wherein the sealing boot reduces analyte leakage.

12. (Withdrawn) A vial autosampler comprising:
means for storing vials;
means for selecting and transporting a selected one of the vials;
means for obtaining a sample from the selected vial;
means for sealing to reduce analyte loss during sample acquisition from
the selected vial.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of obtaining a sample from a vial in an autosampler, the method comprising:
bringing a sampling needle and vial together such that a septum of the
vial is pierced by the sampling needle; and
engaging a sealing boot with the vial ~~septum~~ to reduce analyte leakage.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of engaging the sealing boot further comprises engaging the sealing boot with a needle block to form a sealed volume between the sealing boot, the vial septum and the needle block.

15. (New) A sampling module comprising:
 - a sampling needle, wherein the sampling module is adapted to bring the sampling needle and a vial together such that the sampling needle pierces a septum on the vial;
 - a sealing boot disposed about the sampling needle; andwherein the sealing boot engages the vial when the vial is engaged with the sample needle.
16. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the engaging includes engaging the sealing boot with the septum of the vial.